

Municipality of Chatham-Kent
Infrastructure and Engineering Services
Parks, Recreation and Cemeteries

To: Mayor and Members of Council

From: Robert Pollock, Director, Parks, Recreation and Cemeteries
David Taylor, Director, Legal Services

Date: June 24, 2022

Subject: Surveillance Cameras on Municipal Property

Recommendations

It is recommended that:

1. The Video Surveillance Policy attached as Appendix "A" be approved.
2. The Municipal Clerk and CAO be authorized to approve minor amendments to the attached Video Surveillance Policy from time to time as required.

Background

At the January 21, 2019 Council Meeting, Councillor Authier brought forward the following motion, which was passed by Council:

"That Chatham-Kent bring a report on putting security cameras and also other preventative means for preventing vandalism in at least three of the following locations due to consistent vandalism to the restrooms. Whereas Erieau restrooms are vandalized on an almost yearly basis, and whereas Wallaceburg's Glen Mickle Parks restrooms have also been vandalized and whereas Tilbury Memorial Park has been a constant area being vandalized on an almost yearly basis. And whereas the security cameras may be much cheaper in the long run than just fixing the restrooms and having the vandalism continue in the future. Whereas there may be more parks that are having the same problems, that they be added to the list of parks to have security cameras installed. And pay this over our four year term of Council. I would like a report on the cost to put cameras in the parks on a tall pole where they are not reachable to be stolen. As well, I would like an approx. cost on all vandalism across Chatham-Kent."

Security cameras have tended to be installed in relation to a particular incident or problem that has arisen, and as a result there has not been consistency in the use of surveillance cameras. There has been no existing municipal-wide policy on when

surveillance cameras will be installed, or when other alternatives should be considered. Some business units that have installed surveillance cameras, including Riverview Gardens and Housing Services, have adopted policies for their own facilities. New requests for surveillance camera systems are brought up from time to time by citizens, Council, and/or members of administration. In response to Council's direction, administration has reviewed applicable privacy legislation and discussed best practices for the surveillance camera systems installed at its facilities in order to draft the recommended municipal-wide Video Surveillance Policy.

There are important legal and privacy issues engaged in the installation of security cameras. Administration is therefore recommending the attached Video Surveillance Policy be approved and adopted, as a comprehensive guide for all municipal departments as to the best practices for security camera use at municipal facilities.

Comments

Parks, Recreation and Cemeteries Commentary

The Municipality has 10 arenas, 2 indoor pools, 7 outdoor pools, over 73,000 meters of trails, 6 community halls, multiple meeting spaces, over 150 park areas that contain playgrounds, splash pads, picnic areas, sports fields, storage facilities, and washrooms. This amount of recreational assets spread over all of Chatham-Kent makes it difficult to ensure vandalism is kept to a minimum.

In 2021, the total damages recorded to municipal property under the Parks, Recreation, & Cemeteries division was \$142,000 (Appendix "B".) These costs do not cover employee time and lost efficiencies due to addressing vandalism. The total value of damages in 2021 is spread over the recreational assets listed above throughout Chatham-Kent.

The following areas have had vandalism damage on numerous occasions:

- Kingston Park, Chatham
- Thames Grove, Chatham
- Laverne Kelly Park, Erieau
- Memorial Park, Tilbury
- Glen Mickle Park, Wallaceburg
- Various trails

It is believed that the damage causing breakage to Eco-counters on various trails occurred because some think these are surveillance cameras. Signs have been installed to inform the public they are not cameras but there has still been over \$12,000 in damaged or stolen Eco-counters in 2021.

Frequency and locations of incidents of vandalism are unpredictable. Some areas that are targeted consistently are areas of shelter such as park washrooms. Some of these issues are due to community members who are unhoused wanting to enter the area for

shelter at night time. This results in broken doors and locks, and on occasion, fires inside these areas as the fire is used for warmth during the winter months.

Currently the following methods are utilized to prevent vandalism in parks:

- Locks
- Security bars for doors and windows
- Signage
- Motion sensor lighting

Use of other methods to prevent vandalism could include:

- Security guards to travel to various park areas during the night
- Installation of surveillance cameras to monitor high risk areas
- Noisemaker devices to deter loitering at targeted areas during the night

Security guards would come at a high financial cost to the Municipality and would not provide 100% coverage to monitor high risk areas due to the travel required to monitor various locations. The use of cameras also opens up the risk of damage to the equipment, and cameras have limited views and clarity. People committing vandalism often conceal their identity which would make it difficult to identify them in camera footage. In addition, these methods may further stigmatize people who are unhoused in our community.

It is important that Council and the public understand that while some areas of vandalism occur within locations where security cameras could be installed, not all vandalism/theft occurs within these areas. For example, thefts of Eco-counters along trails would not likely be caught by any surveillance system that is installed. In addition, although 20% of the repair costs for vandalism in 2021 (see Appendix “B”) were due to vandalism in washrooms, for obvious privacy reasons, cameras cannot be installed in these areas where a large proportion of damage occurs.

Municipal Buildings and Facilities

Other Municipal facilities have some video surveillance systems in place, including some office buildings, garages, health facilities, housing facilities, and firehalls. The approach to the installation of surveillance systems in the past has been decentralized, and the systems were often installed at the discretion of the management of the day in charge of the applicable facility. Some systems, such as those within Riverview Gardens and social housing facilities, were also installed due to specific resident safety or property protection priorities that arose from prior incidents. As part of the recommendations outlined under this report, administration has been working at establishing a comprehensive database of existing systems in order to ensure that an assessment of whether the original rationale for installation of the systems is still present, and to ensure that necessary control systems for the information are maintained.

Information Technology and Transformation Commentary

The exact costs to purchase, install, and maintain surveillance cameras for use in park areas are unknown at this time as specifics of the location of the camera, type of camera required, internet connectivity available all factor in to the cost for each unit. However, Information Technology and Transformation has estimated that a total five year cost for these items would be between \$30,000 and \$55,000 for ten cameras (or \$3,000 to \$5500 per unit), subject to site visits and connectivity requirements.

Legal Commentary

While surveillance cameras may protect assets and increase safety, they also introduce privacy considerations. Surveillance cameras in public spaces will inevitably capture recordings that contain personal information, in the form of individuals' images and potentially their conversations. In general, surveillance camera systems used to date have not included audio, but newer systems do sometimes allow for the collection of audio.

The goal of the municipal-wide surveillance camera policy is to allow for decisions on the implementation of new surveillance systems to be done in a thorough and deliberative manner. The Video Surveillance Policy has been drafted to follow the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* ("MFIPPA") and the best practice recommendations of the Information and Privacy Commissioner of Ontario (the "IPC"). The policy ensures MFIPPA legislation and best practices recommended by IPC are reflected in Chatham-Kent's processes and procedures. The policy therefore includes a process for determining when and where to install a surveillance camera, the roles and responsibilities of municipal staff in respect to accessing surveillance cameras, and the process for retaining and disposing of video recording records.

It is also important to ensure a Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Justice (DEIJ) lens be applied to the use of surveillance systems. Administration has had preliminary consultation with the DEIJ Team regarding this policy and will be proceeding with further consultation on this subject. Amendments to the policy may be implemented following this consultation.

Areas of Strategic Focus and Critical Success Factors

The recommendations in this report support the following areas of strategic focus:

- ☐ Economic Prosperity:
Chatham-Kent is an innovative and thriving community with a diversified economy
- ☒ A Healthy and Safe Community:
Chatham-Kent is a healthy and safe community with sustainable population growth
- ☐ People and Culture:

Chatham-Kent is recognized as a culturally vibrant, dynamic, and creative community

- ☐ Environmental Sustainability:
Chatham-Kent is a community that is environmentally sustainable and promotes stewardship of our natural resources

The recommendations in this report support the following critical success factors:

- ☐ Financial Sustainability:
The Corporation of the Municipality of Chatham-Kent is financially sustainable
- ☒ Open, Transparent and Effective Governance:

The Corporation of the Municipality of Chatham-Kent is open, transparent and effectively governed with efficient and bold, visionary leadership
- ☐ Has the potential to support all areas of strategic focus & critical success factors
- ☐ Neutral issues (does not support negatively or positively)

Consultation

The Director, Information Technology & Transformation, the Manager of Assets, the Coordinator of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, and the Municipal Clerk were consulted while preparing the Video Surveillance Policy.

Financial Implications

Funding for installation of any new systems would be determined and requested during the budget process as needs are identified.

Prepared by:

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Reviewed by:

Ryan Brown, Acting General Manager, IES

Consulted and confirmed the content of the consultation section of the report by:

Catherine Fitzgerald, Director, Information Technology & Transformation

Tom Skodak, Manager, Municipal Assets

Rebecca Haskell-Thomas, Coordinator, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Judy Smith, Clerk

Attachments: Appendix "A" - Video Surveillance Policy

Appendix "B": - 2021 Vandalism Costs – Parks, Recreation and
Cemeteries